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KGB called 'linchpin' of Soviet system today

By Bill Gertz
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Despite Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's promises of significant reforms in the Soviet society, the KGB intelligence service remains the "linchpin" of communist rule, according to two American intelligence experts.

"The KGB is the cutting edge of the [Soviet] system," said John J. Dziak, a lecturer on Soviet intelligence at George Washington University. "The Soviet system can't survive without it."

Mr. Dziak said he has seen no signs of any substantive changes in the Soviet system and does not expect any until there is "true diminution in the relations between the [Communist] Party and the state security apparatus."

He said the KGB, Communist Party and to a lesser extent the Red Army provide an interchangeable corps of leaders for the Soviet system.

Defense Intelligence College lecturer Raymond G. Rocca sees the KGB as far more than a police and espionage service; it is a major player in the theory and practice of communist ideology, he says.

"You don't just give history a nudge, but you make sure you have a bodyguard of liars to direct it," Mr. Rocca said of the KGB. "It's the linchpin of the communist system," he said.

Mr. Rocca and Mr. Dziak, who is on leave from the Defense Intelligence Agency to write a history of the KGB, provided rare public insights into the nature of the KGB during an interview. Both have studied the Soviet intelligence services for decades and believe investigation of the KGB has been neglected by the U.S. academic community.

Research on security systems is "very unappreciated" in academic and foreign policy studies, Mr. Dziak said, but it is vital to understanding the Soviet Union.

Tracing the origins of the KGB, Mr. Rocca said the organization evolved from the Bolshevik political police organ — the Cheka — into the "personalized" security organ of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin and now has

become the "true sword and shield" of the Soviet Communist Party.

"The KGB today is the KGB that grew out of that adaptation," said Mr. Rocca, who until 1974 was deputy chief of CIA counterintelligence. "Its watchword is 'return to the operational style of [KGB founder and first chief Feliks] Dzerzhinsky.'" Mr. Dzerzhinsky founded the Cheka in 1917 under Vladimir Lenin, who preached that "a good communist is a good Chekist," according to Mr. Rocca.

The two experts recently completed a new, annotated listing of some of the most important sources of published literature on the Soviet spy apparatus.

The new book, "Bibliography on Soviet Intelligence and Security Services," published by Westview Press, contains listings and brief summaries of more than 500 books and articles. The book grew out of a project started by Georgetown University professor Roy Godson — the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence — which promotes scholarly inquiries into intelligence-related issues.

Included are book titles about the KGB's wartime counterespionage service Smersh — which literally means "death to spies" — and a wide range of accounts by hundreds of Soviet defectors and Western specialists.

Smersh agents arrested famed author Alexander Solzhenitsyn in 1941, an event that led to his internment in a Soviet labor camp. He survived to write one of the most important exposes of the Soviet police state, "The Gulag Archipelago."

Asked to single out some of the more important books about the KGB, Mr. Rocca recommended as the "classic expose" the 1974 book by Simon Wolin and Robert M. Slusser, "The Soviet Secret Police."

The bibliography also provides a list of 70 Soviet books about the KGB. Many have been translated into English by the Commerce Department's National Technical Information Service. Russian language listings include a KGB handbook for conducting interrogations, Lenin's notebook on Carl von Clausewitz' "On War" and the anecdotal memoirs of Soviet security operators, "Chekists About Their Work."